

Council, 19 January 2022

Questions from Councillors

Wards: All

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Report summary

Questions and answers submitted by Councillors, in accordance with the Council Committee Rules and Procedures as set out in the Constitution.

1. Councillor Jonathan Bartley

To: Councillor Maria Kay, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Evictions

In 2020 the leader of the council wrote a letter to all Lambeth residents saying “no evictions will be pursued by the council during the pandemic”. The council is now pursuing evictions. Why has it broken this promise and in light of the new Covid variant will it now end the pursuit of evictions?

Party: Green

Answer:

We are determined to protect residents from evictions as we know many of our tenants have faced serious financial difficulties as a result of Covid-19 and the ongoing restrictions and knock-on impacts of our efforts to stop the spread of the virus. The administration halted evictions before the government’s announcement during the first lockdown who may fall in extreme difficulty, and we have consistently lobbied to extend the ban during periods of major restrictions.

From the outset, I must be clear that eviction is always a last resort and the Council will endeavour not to evict tenants where possible. The Council has maintained its support for our residents over eighteen months however from 1 October 2021, all legal notice periods for evictions returned to the pre-pandemic position. Where tenants do fall into arrears every effort is made to help them address the issue. Support includes help with domestic finance, help accessing the correct benefits and dealing with other debts.

Since the pandemic started, housing income team have introduced further checks before issuing cases for rent arrears in court and all cases are referred to housing support. There is a more cautious approach taken regarding issuing cases and eviction. The team attempt to contact all tenants, and the tenants contacted are asked about COVID-19 and the impact it has had on them which will be considered, and tenants signposted to support, for example through our partnership with the experienced social enterprise Income Max. In cases where there is no contact, they visit the premises prior to any eviction being carried out to provide direct support.

We’re still making every effort to assist tenants in sustaining their tenancies and will only consider bringing eviction proceedings in the most serious circumstances, such as cases involving significant anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse. There have only been three evictions carried out in this financial year, with the combined arrears around £34k and were largely accrued before the pandemic. It is right that while protecting those who are struggling, we do not allow people who can pay and refuse to, when efforts are made to support reasonable repayments, to stay in a home that could go to someone in need on the waiting list.

2. Councillor Tim Briggs

To: Cllr Mahamed Hashi and Cllr Danial Adilypour, joint cabinet members for Sustainable Transport, Environment & Clean Air

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Labour councillors privatising and closing roads for a privileged few ('Low Traffic Neighbourhoods', or 'LTNs') creates extra traffic gridlock, and more pollution for residents living on or near boundary roads. There is no evidence of any weight that any traffic has ever 'evaporated'. In the Scrutiny Meeting on 12.10.2021, I explained how the alleged 'evaporation' of traffic after imposing LTNs had been misrepresented by Professor Rachel Aldred who is funded by the London Cycling Campaign ('LCC'), that has also now also been discredited for vile racism. The LCC's 'A Guide to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods' urges that councillors 'Don't Make It A Yes Or No Vote' (since whenever residents have been given a 'Yes or No' vote, as in Conservative-run Wandsworth, the results have been over 80% against LTNs, leading to their removal).

In the recent Streatham Wells LTN commonplace engagement survey, even without a 'Yes/No' vote, 63.69% of the 504 aspiration comments were against introducing an LTN. 78.37% of the aspiration comments were made by people directly living in the area, and 64.05% of people living in the LTN area were against the LTN, with 33.67% of people living in the LTN area supportive of the LTN.

Will Labour councillors now finally listen to residents suffering from this ridiculous policy and remove the LTNs - or will they ignore residents on the advice of their racist friends in the LCC, and the wealthy Labour supporters and councillors who benefit from property price increases within LTNs?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

It is clear from this question and from Cllr Briggs' previous comments on this issue that if you are a Lambeth resident who is not in a position to be able to afford to run a car, or if you are living in a neighbourhood blighted by through-traffic and the associated air and noise pollution, road danger and severance, then he and the Lambeth Tories are not interested in helping you.

In Lambeth Labour, we are proud of our commitment to tackling the structural inequalities present in our communities, in our neighbourhoods and on our streets. This includes the fact that over 60% of our residents do not own or have access to a car and are reliant on public transport, walking and cycling to get around. It includes our commitment to the Mayor of London's Vision Zero, aiming for zero collisions resulting in someone being killed or seriously injured on Lambeth's roads by 2041. This is particularly important given the hugely disproportionate impact that road danger has on disabled pedestrians, who are over four times more likely to be the victim of a collision than a non-disabled pedestrian.

It is why we are proud of Lambeth's transport strategy agreed in 2019, and that we took the action that we did to provide affordable, safe and accessible alternatives for residents at the start of the pandemic. And, it's why we're proud of our colleagues, Cllr Reynolds and Cllr Corry-Roake's, who are working hard with local residents in Clapham Common ward who are campaigning for a low traffic neighbourhood and council officers to thrash out solutions on the ground to these problems. Residents of Clapham have a very distinct choice in May - do they put their faith in local resident representatives who work hard to make their streets safer, or do they choose to back the Tories and Cllr Briggs, who has tried to prevent any attempt to make streets in Clapham safer for residents - even going so far as to campaign against a school street at Iqra Primary School to make it safer for school kids to get to school.

3. Councillor Jon Davies

To: Councillor Andy Wilson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Living Wage

What progress is being made to Lambeth becoming a Living Wage Place?

Party: Labour

Answer:

A Lambeth Living Wage Place working group with local businesses, anchor institutions, and BIDs has been established and met in November 2021. This working group, supported by the Living Wage Foundation, will develop the Lambeth approach to becoming an accredited Living Wage Place. This work also involves widely promoting the London Living Wage, seeking to ensure that all businesses who may be already paying the London Living Wage are supported to go through accreditation.

Lambeth Council was the [2021 Living Wage Champions](#) winner of the Public Sector Award, awarded to the Public Sector Living Wage Employer showing exceptional leadership in the local community, and across the public sector. Lambeth now has more than 200 London Living Wage employers, through our responsible procurement policy all contracts that involve the employment of staff are expected to comply with the payment of the London Living Wage as a minimum and an expectation to sign up to the Healthy Workplace Charter, and to date has supported two key anchor institutions in the borough (Guy's & St. Thomas', and South London and Maudsley Trusts) to become Living Wage accredited, ensuring a Living Wage for their collective 31,000 employees.

4. Councillor Liz Atkins

To: Councillor Jim Dickson and Lucy Caldicott , Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (job share)

Council response to new variant

How effectively is the Council working with the NHS to tackle Omicron - in particular to boost vaccination rates and to stem the huge surge in cases?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The Council has been working closely with the NHS throughout the pandemic in particular to support testing, vaccination, and hospital discharge. Most recently the Council Covid-19 response team have provided mutual aid to NHS trusts to enable staff to access LFD testing as well as prioritising essential workers for LFD distribution at our local sites given the current constraints of LFD supply being experienced nationally.

In late December we opened a temporary vaccination site at the Civic Centre working with a local pharmacy. Over 2,560 vaccinations have been administered through this site. In the most recent weeks around 20% of these are first doses. We have also been using the Health and Wellbeing Bus in key, high footfall locations to support vaccine uptake in areas with lower vaccine coverage and make the offer of vaccination available in the centre of our communities, alongside wider health advice and support. We have also increased vaccination sites by introducing additional community pharmacies.

We have an ongoing programme of work to support vaccination uptake in those communities with lowest vaccination rates, working with faith and community organisations. The Council works closely together with NHS engagement and communications leads seeking to involve residents in how they can stay safe through the pandemic, how they can seek support where needed and how together we can help reduce transmission action.

Lambeth has the highest number of PCR testing sites of any London borough, and our Covid-19 marshals work with businesses to support them in the understanding and implementing the Plan B requirements. They also support the safe operation of our testing and vaccination sites. The public health team also supports local businesses and organisations with the management of outbreaks amongst staff and service users.

The Council public health and adult integrated commissioning teams have provided support to care homes to manage outbreaks and ensure they have a resilient supply of PPE and LFD and PCR tests available to them as required.

In order for NHS capacity to be used effectively and that people are cared for in most appropriate settings, ensuring that those patients with more complex care needs are supported to be discharged from hospital safely and in a timely way is critical. Lambeth Council supports the NHS to enable safe discharge. On a daily basis the situation in care homes is reviewed to enable patients in hospitals to be discharged as quickly as possible. Our adult social care brokerage teams support the hospital discharge teams by identifying care providers for both home care and residential care. We have block booked additional capacity to support discharge pathways so that patients can rapidly be stepped down once they are medically fit for discharge.

5. Councillor Christopher Wellbelove

To: Councillor Jim Dickson and Lucy Caldicott , Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (job share)

Support for Mental health services

It has been widely reported that there has been a rise in mental health issues over the past few years, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. There will undoubtedly been a rise in the number of cases related to mental-ill health referred to healthcare providers in Lambeth during the pandemic. Can the Cabinet Member tell us how that rise in cases compares to the number of referrals made to voluntary sector organisations who provide mental health support, and how many of those organisations have continued to provide valuable face to face service, and what guidance / recommendations has Lambeth given to the sector?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The Council and Lambeth Together partners are fully aware of the detrimental impact of Covid-19 on the mental wellbeing of people who live and work in Lambeth, specifically in relation to increasing their daily stress and anxiety, social isolation, debt and, potentially, their economic insecurity.

In Lambeth, mental health services for working age adults are delivered by the Living Well Network Alliance (LWNA) which includes both the NHS and voluntary and community sector partners, Certitude and Thamesreach. The Alliance works collaboratively with voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners to ensure that information is provided about how to access services; we have streamlined our referral process through the Single Point of Access (SPA), as well as provided Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention support to a range of community organisations including housing, debt, money advice and employment agencies.

In relation to mental health services the activity is detailed below, based on our new service offer introduced over the last two years and which evidences the level of support being provided to Lambeth residents during the pandemic.

Lambeth Single Point of Access received a total of 7,231 referrals during 2021, an average of 603 per month. Monthly numbers have been volatile with a peak of 688 received in March 2021, as lockdown measures were relaxed and another peak of 713 in November 2021. The main source of referrals are from Lambeth GPs. Of the total referrals received, 28% result in a referral to a secondary care service for onward support, whilst referrals not meeting the criteria for secondary care are signposted to local Lambeth community offers. The team assess all referrals for urgency within one working day and prioritise those that are most urgent.

The Listening Place is a VSC partner offering support for people who are feeling suicidal. The Listening Place received 730 referrals from Lambeth over the past 12 months, accounting for 16% of all referrals and making Lambeth the second biggest referral source by visitor postcode.

Over the period January 2022 to January 2023, the Listening Place expects to:

- Accept 1000 referrals from Lambeth based residents.
- Provide ongoing support to 700 suicidal individuals from Lambeth

SEL CCG in Lambeth commissions the Evening Sanctuary provided by Mosaic Clubhouse which provides short-term support to Lambeth residents who are experiencing a mental health crisis. It offers support 7 nights a week from 6:00pm – 12:00am. One of the key aims of the service is to prevent people from accessing crisis-based interventions from busy accident and emergency departments. In 2020/21 a total of 132 people attended the service with 497 attendances in total. This increased 2021/22 and as at November 2021, 174 people had attended the service with a total of 938 attendances.

Face-to-face services remain in operation. Alliance staff's offer includes in person and, in line with Covid-19 guidance, also home visits to service users with PPE and risk assessments as appropriate. Face to face approaches are particularly utilised for people needing enhanced or crisis support. The Mosaic Evening Sanctuary offer is face-to-face and Listening Place similarly provides in person sessions.

We have also prioritised work with VCS partners to address the specific mental health needs of key communities including African and Caribbean and LGBTQ+ residents. Alongside this, we have also regularly disseminated government national and local public health guidance regarding management of Covid-19 through our mental health providers and VCS partners across the system.

6. Councillor Marcia Cameron

To: Councillor Ed Davie, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Supporting Children on free school meals

Can the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People tell me how the council is supporting children on free school meals as families face pressure from government benefit cuts and failure to control rising food and energy prices?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The callous decision by the Conservative government to cut £20 per week in Universal Credit, rising prices and the impact of Covid-19 on households is having a stark impact with rising numbers of people needing to rely on foodbanks to get by. This comes at a time when household bills are also going up and there is job insecurity as a result of the pandemic.

In Lambeth 41,000 residents have been impacted by the reduction of £20 per week in Universal Credit cut, of which 15,000 are out of work. 21,000 households in the borough are known to already be in fuel poverty, a situation made more acute by rising prices.

In the face of these very real challenges, we are working hard to put in extra support where we are able to. We have designed a Winter Support Package to help families through what are going to be the very tough months ahead. Lambeth Council's Winter Support Package will support families amid rising concern about the cost of living, including energy bills going

up, rising inflation, the removal of the increase to universal credit and increasing demand for food support in the borough.

Over 60% of the £2.7m package has been allocated for vulnerable households with children towards food/bill vouchers for families with children eligible for free school meal. This includes school aged children attending provision, children who are eligible for 2-year-old pupil place and are classified as vulnerable and also 3 and 4 year olds entitled to Pupil Premium. Lambeth have decided to extend this to 6th Form student for the Christmas holiday as well as the February Half term and the Easter Holidays.

This follows on from the Summer of Food and Fun programme, which saw local youngsters taking part in the sport, educational, social and fun activities, and well as receiving a healthy nutritional lunch under the programme, as well as Lambeth Council stepping in to fund Free School Meals in October 2020 when the Tory government turned a blind eye to child food poverty.

To support the work additional support is being provided to the borough's existing surplus food distribution scheme (operated by Healthy Living Platform out of Brixton Rec) and to the Trussell Trust foodbanks in the borough to ensure they are able to meet demand over the winter period. The Trussell Trust operate four foodbanks in Lambeth, distributing food parcels to our most vulnerable residents.

As a Labour Council we are also improving our Council Tax Support Scheme to bring 7,000 of our most disadvantaged households out of having to pay Council Tax and widening our support so that a further 4,000 households, who are just about managing, will receive additional support for their bills. We have recently consulted on whether to make this increase in the scope and funding available for our Council Tax Support Scheme permanent to protect more residents who find Council Tax unaffordable. For many families in the borough, the Council's.

7. Councillor Rezina Chowdhury

To: Councillors Mahamed Hashi and Danny Adilypour, Cabinet Members for Sustainable Transport, Environment and Clean Air

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Recent deliberative research published by NatCen which set out to explore how consensus can be built around LTNs, made 10 key recommendations about implementation of future LTNs. One of the recommendations was for local authorities to engage with LTN residents, boundary residents and businesses from the very start, and provide relevant information. Another was for consultation and resident engagement to be on an ongoing basis and to ensure that it is inclusive and accessible to all.

Residents also wanted to see a credible rationale for LTNs including an explanation of why they are needed in a particular area and the likely benefits e.g., any evidence for the reduction of traffic and improvement in air quality. They understand that something needs to be done about traffic and air quality, but they want LTNs to work for everyone. So, one of the other recommendations is for local authorities to provide a map of all the LTNs across their borough and neighbouring boroughs to help residents navigate them effectively.

As we all want LTNs to work for everyone, can you provide reassurances that these recommendations will be taken forward by the council and considered seriously before implementation of future LTNs?

Party: Labour

Answer:

During 2020 Lambeth brought forward five trial Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. These were implemented as swiftly as possible in response to the public health emergency under direct instruction from Central Government and based on the Council's Transport Strategy. Although the difficult circumstances at the time of implementation limited the amount of pre-engagement that was possible on these schemes, the Council had at the time recently consulted on its Transport Strategy 2019 and 'rat running' traffic on local streets came across as a key concern. The Low Traffic Neighbourhood Plan set out our approach to neighbourhood traffic reduction and was the basis for the identification of areas to prioritise initially.

Subsequently there has been extensive engagement on the emergency LTNs as part of the scheme trials which are now nearing completion. We have also held full public consultations and collected large amounts of data to monitor the impacts of these schemes. The results have been published in a transparent and accessible way. We have also focussed on the differential impact on different groups, including in particular work around the impact on disabled people.

While Covid-19 is unfortunately still with us, the context for future LTN schemes has changed. We have learnt a great deal over the last 18 months, from our own experience and feedback on our LTNs (including the recent Scrutiny report) and from wider research, such as the NatCen work referred to.

We know that more engagement is needed prior to introduction of further schemes and we now have the opportunity to do this. We are at an early stage in project development of new LTNs and this will include a thorough assessment of the likely impacts, such as any increase in traffic, pollution or travel time for certain sections of road and/or certain journeys. We will carry out detailed modelling of any interventions and share the results before proposing to implement further trials. Above all we will work with local residents and stakeholders to find out their views and aspirations and how we can best accommodate these while developing a scheme that reduces traffic and emissions and makes our local streets safer and more accessible and liveable for everyone.

8. Councillor Martin Tiedemann

To: Councillor Sonia Winifred, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture

Naming of streets and buildings

The borough boasts many streets, parks and buildings with names reflecting the international links of our residents. However, despite having some of the highest numbers of

residents with Latin American and Portuguese backgrounds in the UK, very few names related to those connections are found. Romero Close and Pablo Neruda Close are two of the only exceptions - although these were named after prominent Latinxs, neither appeared to have an obvious connection with Lambeth. Whilst recognising that Darcus Howe is to be remembered in the name of a new block in Brixton Hill, recent naming applications in Brixton have been for a Victorian florist, a Victorian builder and an Edwardian cinema - features of Brixton that do not completely reflect the Brixton of today.

Can the Cabinet member please outline which Lambeth streets and buildings have been named after those from a migrant background under the Council's current policy? Given the borough's important links with Portugal (particularly Madeira), Latin America, the Horn of Africa and West Africa, as well as the Caribbean, does the Cabinet member feel the current policy does enough to encourage developers to use of names of migrants or of locations associated with migrants so that their contribution and their heritage is also marked?

Party: Labour

Answer:

In Lambeth we are rightly proud of the rich diversity of our communities and the welcoming spirit of our borough to new arrivals, from wherever in the world they come from, that make Lambeth their home.

I would like to thank Cllr Tiedemann for his question. As a result, I have requested that officers within the Street Naming and Numbering team, when they are approached, to advise and recommend that developers consider cultural linkages to the borough in order that some of the diverse communities highlighted by Cllr Tiedemann receive more recognition when it comes to naming.

In addition, I have requested that officers in the Archives team begin a piece of work to determine and inventory Lambeth streets and buildings that have been named after those from a migrant background and pull together a list of appropriate names that satisfy current guidance and could be suggested when approached by developers that reflect the diversity and history of the borough.

Lambeth council will also soon begin the second phase of its review into locations and diversity in the public realm, which has been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions, building on the work from the first phase that began in October 2020. Through consultation and education, I look forward to hearing from and working with our residents towards creating an inclusive borough that celebrates the backgrounds of all our communities.

9. Councillor Nicole Griffiths

To: Councillor Claire Holland, Leader of the Council

Resetting waste and recycling targets

Given the recent report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Air Pollution

<https://appgaq.files.wordpress.com/2021/12/211208-waste-incineration-and-public-health-appg-air-pollution-report.pdf>) which states:

“In the aftermath of a disappointing COP26, it is important to promote the improvement of air quality as a central strategy to combat climate change and to improve human health. This means that we should apply the precautionary principle to waste incineration and that Government and local authorities must take time to think again, in particular when considering the health risks of putting plants in urban locations with dense populations”.

Will the council re-set and improve targets to reduce waste sent for incineration, and to increase recycling rates?

Party: Green

Answer:

Targets will be reviewed and evaluated in 2022 as part of the annual Waste Strategy review. The last year has seen changing household patterns due to Covid-19, lockdowns and working from home, which have led to increases of around 5 percentage points in recycling (from 31% to 36%) and greater increases in residual waste. Our targets are constantly reviewed and we will review them carefully in the context of this changing national landscape as we work to achieve Lambeth’s air quality and carbon emissions objectives for net zero by 2030.

10. Councillor Marianna Masters

To: Councillors Lucy Caldicott and Jim Dickson, joint Cabinet Members for Health and Adult Social Care

Supporting Lambeth’s Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities with the pandemic

What is the council doing to support the health and wellbeing of Lambeth’s Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities as we emerge from or learn to live with the pandemic?

Party: Labour

Answer:

In Lambeth the Council is continuing to work with our Lambeth Together partners to carefully monitor and respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes our acute response to outbreaks and rising rates in our community and through the Covid-19 Recovery Plan in terms of the ongoing health impact on our residents and on our care services. We monitor our Covid-19 data and vaccination uptake by ethnicity which enables us to identify those groups which are at higher risk or need more support.

Our recently reviewed Covid-19 Recovery Plan retains a focus on inequalities, and this remains a core strategic objective for the Lambeth Together integrated health and care system. Part of Covid-19 recovery includes ensuring that previous preventative programmes

such as screening and vaccination for other diseases are able to resume and catch up those who have missed out. Using a health equity approach and tools we have developed as part of our Covid-19 response we will be able to see the differential uptake and take steps to address this. Our approach to inequalities is wider than ethnicity and takes account of disability and other protected characteristics.

We recognise that whilst inequalities have always been endemic and a major challenge for our borough, many of these have been further exacerbated by the pandemic and we are seeing wider impacts, such as in education, poverty and other health outcomes.

The Lambeth Health and Wellbeing Strategy and our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment are being refreshed this year (2022). We will use our learning from the pandemic to take further action to tackle the wider determinants of health including housing, education, employment etc. and join up policy to improve health outcomes.

As a Local Care Partnership, Lambeth Together will focus on prevention and use the relationships we have built with communities through the pandemic to engage with residents; particularly those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to address health needs with regard for cultural factors and barriers to accessing health and care. In support of this we have established a partnership Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Group to advise upon and enable partners to share approaches and to monitor improvement.

Our learning has shown us the importance of taking a holistic approach to the health and wellbeing of our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities as well as working to increase confidence in the local health system. The Council and partners are working with trusted community networks, such as the Beacon Project that run regular outreach health sessions involving Black, Asian and minority ethnic health professionals to engage with community members and ensure local services are accessible. Work is also underway to further develop and support the role of local faith organisations in promoting health and wellbeing. The Council continues to work in partnership on specific health and wellbeing issues with established community organisations, such as Black Thrive and the Portuguese Wellbeing Partnership.

Health and wellbeing hubs have been established across the borough as part of Thriving communities. Whilst some of these were initially set up to support with food distribution during the early stages of the pandemic, they have grown to include a wider health and wellbeing offer including employment and benefits advice and health advice. They are in areas of higher deprivation and with diverse populations and aim to provide a community led approach to health and wellbeing reflecting local needs which can be supported by statutory services where necessary.

11. Councillor Scott Ainslie

To: Councillors Andy Wilson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Use of Public Money

For 8 years, The Green Party have been asking for this administration to improve

procurement and contract management. Since that time there has been no improvement. For example:

- The New Town Hall Project has gone tens of millions of pounds over budget.
- Standing orders are still being repeatedly ignored. Right now a decision is in the pipeline to award a £4 - £7 million contract to Savills when only two tenders were received. There should be 3 quotes, minimum.
- The Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee recently heard testimony from leaseholders about substantial overpayments to contractors.
- In my own ward, a 68% increase in the contract value for works to a hostel is waiting to be signed off.

When is this administration going to admit that it has a problem and address this waste of public money?

Party: Green

Answer:

The Greens yet again provide little detail for their tired calls and detail-light proposals for improved contract management when it comes to the council's procurement activity.

The Council has robust and detailed procurement policies and guidance together with contract management arrangements including a dedicated team supporting contract owners to monitor and performance manage contracts. All procurement activity complies with prevailing guidance and procedures and decision reports clearly set out the procurement processes followed to arrive at the recommended decision.

12. Councillor Mary Atkins

To: Councillors Mahamed Hashi and Danny Adilypour, Cabinet Members for Sustainable Transport, Environment and Clean Air

Bus stop from Brixton to Tulse Hill/West Norwood

Residents of Tulse Hill started a petition to call on the Council to put pressure on Transport for London to reinstate the bus stops to Tulse Hill and West Norwood from Effra Road to central Brixton. This petition has been signed by over a 1000 people in a 3 week period reflecting the urgency of the issue. The original reasons for the petition are as below:

- Disabled residents are unable to get from Brixton tube to the current bus stops;
- Visitors have complained that they are unable to find the current bus stop;
- People expect to get home from the Brixton town centre more easily, safely and quickly; the current distance is too much especially for the elderly, disabled and people carrying shopping / bags, children's buggies etc.;
- The Coldharbour road crossing to get to current bus stop is extremely hazardous;

- The Effra Road pavement is narrow, frequently becomes congested and does not allow for disabled and elderly persons to stop and rest;
 - The only alternative bus stop is beyond Brixton police station and is too far for many residents to walk, and those with mobility issues cannot easily change buses there.
- In addition to the original reasons for the petition, residents have contacted us about the concerns around women's and young people's safety, as well as the difficulties of getting across Windrush square.

Could the Cabinet member update us on progress negotiating with TfL on alternative measures to keep all residents safe from Covid while allowing bus stops to be accessible and will the Cabinet member meet with residents to discuss their ideas to improve the situation?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic TfL were already developing plans to rationalise the bus stops on Brixton Road by grouping bus routes with shared destinations to call at the same stops e.g., all the southbound Effra Road / Tulse Hill / Herne Hill routes to call at the same stop. Officers supported this as a logical approach to make it easier for passengers to know where to board. These plans were disrupted however by the arrival of the pandemic and the urgent need to introduce social distancing measures. To protect public health TfL widened the pavement on Brixton Road to allow more space for passengers to board and alight buses safely. As part of this however, the Tulse Hill bus routes were diverted to stops away from the town centre.

This was a temporary measure and the Council has consistently advocated for the reversal of this change at the earliest opportunity. I am grateful for the work that Tulse Hill ward councillors and others did to raise this with TfL and our London Assembly member. We are aware of the many concerns expressed by local people and bus passengers affected by the current situation which has been exacerbated by the essential anti-terrorism works taking place at Windrush Square.

TfL have now agreed in principle that the Tulse Hill bound bus stop will be returned to the Brixton Road. This will be in the near future, although an exact timescale is yet to be confirmed. At the same time, the Council has requested that the widened pavement at Brixton Road is retained as this provides a significant benefit to pedestrians at a very crowded location.

13. Councillor Ibrahim Dogus

To: Councillor Ed Davie, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Lambeth's Children Social Care

In light of recent concerns about children's services nationally does the Cabinet Member have any recent feedback from Ofsted inspectors and children in care themselves regarding Lambeth's children's social care?

Party: Labour

Answer:

On 1 December 2021, national inspectors praised the work of Lambeth Council's Children's Services, following an official visit in October. A team from Ofsted spent two days in the borough on a "focused visit", designed to check the borough's first response children's social care services (or 'front door').

The visit was focused on the 'front door' service consisting of Early Help, Integrated Referral Hub and Child Assessment Team services. 'Front door' services refer to the provisions and arrangements that children's services have in place when they are initially contacted by a professional or member of the public who is concerned about a child.

The headline findings are positive and acknowledge the progress which has been made on Lambeth's improvement journey since it received an "inadequate" judgement in 2015.

Inspectors reported finding an effective 'front door' into children's social care, building on the positive findings in this area from the previous inspection in February 2018, where Lambeth received an improved "requires improvement" judgement from Ofsted.

Ofsted also praised the strong and cohesive relationships between the various agencies and how they quickly provide and evaluate necessary background information. This is all overseen by experienced managers that work swiftly and make clear and balanced decisions regarding next steps. Lambeth's assessments of children and families are also carried out appropriately and rapidly, while always maintaining the context in mind.

We are ensuring that social workers continue to make regular statutory face to face visits to our most vulnerable children. This is closely monitored on a weekly basis by the Director of Children's Social Care. Safety and contingency plans are in place for those children who we are not able to see regularly for a variety of reasons to ensure they are safe and well.

We will await the outcome and learning from the national reviews regarding the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo- Hughes and Star Hobson and will ensure the Lambeth Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) board considers these and implement the identified learning.

Regarding hearing from children in care themselves, we work closely with our children looked after to listen to their lived experiences and involve them in service design, to ensure that our support and services meet their needs. We have an established Children in Care Council (CICC) called 'Visions of Success'. Children looked after and care leavers come together and represent our wider children looked after and care leaver population and are involved in a whole host of consultations and work closely with officers not only in children's social care but across the Council and the wider partnership.

Our CICC are members of our corporate parenting board, where they have an equal voice. Some of our children in care have recently made a film, in response to the IICSA report, outlining their experiences of being a child looked after in Lambeth, speaking to us about what has gone well and how we can further support young people. Since refreshing our corporate parenting board we have received positive feedback from our children looked

after, who have reported feeling safe, respected, and able to articulate their own thoughts, views, wishes and experiences.

Elected members who sit on the corporate parenting board have commenced a cycle of visits to children looked after in residential homes, foster care homes and semi-independent living placements to gain their views on the quality of their care and the support they receive. We have also recently worked with over 40 children looked after and care leavers to review Lambeth's pledge to children looked after and care leavers and this will be revised and published in the spring of 2022.

Officers work closely with our children looked after and care leavers and ensure, where appropriate they are visited and spoken to on their own, to enable them to express any concerns they may have. They also have regular opportunities through annual reviews to feedback to officers.

14. Councillor Pete Elliott

To: Councillor Andy Wilson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Key worker payments for contractors

Some of the council's key workers, such as security guards and cleaners have worked for the council for decades, and during the global pandemic, they have kept the council open for business. Have all the council's workers who are employed by contractors, such as Engie, received the same key worker payments during the pandemic that other directly employed Lambeth staff have?

What were the value of the key worker payments given to the council's workers and contractors and what support is being given to the families of those staff who have lost their lives due to COVID or those workers who are now affected by 'long COVID'?

Finally, do contractors who work anti-social hours (such as security guards), receive the same or similar levels of additional payments as directly employed Lambeth staff, in recognition of the anti-social hours they work, and what are those additional payments?

Party: Green

Answer:

Despite the upheaval that we all faced in our lives during the pandemic, I am proud to report that 100% of essential services were delivered by all staff employed by Lambeth Council during this challenging time. This is testament to the effort, dedication, and professionalism of all staff working for Lambeth Council, exhibiting a spirit of public service and hard work in maintaining provision for some of our most vulnerable residents during the most trying of times.

All contracts that involve the employment of staff are expected to comply with the payment of the London Living Wage as a minimum and an expectation to sign up to the Healthy Workplace Charter. The Council agreed a £250 ex gratia payment to all council staff

including agency workers below director level in recognition of the additional efforts and contributions during what has been a very challenging period.

The cleaning and security staff employed by contractors did not receive the key worker bonus payment, however where possible we have taken the opportunity to bring reception and security staff in-house. To assist in our efforts to manage the effects of the pandemic, the council in some instances had to increase the number of temporary agency staff to assist with distribution at food hubs and Covid-19 enforcement. However, the council also continued to pay the base contract costs for all sites which ensured that all cleaning and security staff received their normal wages during the pandemic period, even when buildings were closed, this was done to reduce any impact or financial hardship to the security and cleaning teams during this period.

We continue to provide support to individuals affected by Long COVID or loss through our health and well-being processes.

15. Councillor Kevin Craig

To: Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Deputy Leader (Jobs, Skills and Community Safety)

Kennington Police Station

At a recent meeting of the Southbank Forum which I attended last week alongside Florence Eshalomi MP the question of crime in the North of the Borough came up. Throughout the pandemic it remains of huge concern in the Waterloo area, as evidenced by comments from the BID, Jubilee Gardens Trust, and other local groups.

Labour, under this Council's leadership, and also nationally, is rightly now very clearly a Party strongly in favour of law and order. We equally care about youth work and tackling the causes of crime. What update can the Council provide on the campaign to ensure the former Kennington Police Station is kept in community use ideally to support work aimed at young people and keeping them out of trouble.

Party: Labour

Answer:

The Council is committed to tackling crime and disorder throughout the borough with our partners and the local community, including delivering outcome through our Lambeth Made Safer Strategy, VAWG strategy and the Safer Lambeth Partnership. The Police have confirmed that Kennington Police station is still currently in use by the Metropolitan Police for the selection and assessment of officers and staff in response to the force's increase in recruitment. The Police have also confirmed that the building has been refurbished for this purpose. The Police have not confirmed future plans for the site, but their estates department has been asked for an update. If the property is earmarked for disposal by the Police in the future, the Council would be supportive of proposals to use the property for the benefit of the local community.

16. Councillor Pete Elliott

To: Councillor Maria Kay, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Poor Housing repairs in south of borough

Since the changeover of housing repairs contractors in July, residents in the south of the borough have experienced significant problems with repairs and maintenance. Can the Cabinet Member for Housing explain the reasons for the particularly poor housing repair service in the south of Lambeth and can she let residents know when things will improve, such that there is no disparity between the repair services given to tenants across the borough?

Party: Green

Answer:

Everyone in Lambeth deserves to live in a good quality home and a safe environment. That is why in addition to the creation of Community Works, a wholly new council team, to directly undertake communal repairs, the Council has mobilised five new south-area contracts to improve our repairs capacity. The in-house repairs team and four of the new south-area contracts are working very well and delivering high quality repairs, but the in-dwelling repairs contract is taking longer to settle in. The primary reasons for this extended settling-in period are:

- (1) A backlog of unfinished repairs from the previous contractor (Mears);
- (2) 50% of the staff expected to move from Mears didn't transfer across;
- (3) Severe shortages in the labour market (post Brexit);
- (4) Temporary increase in service demand (Covid impact).

To drive the necessary performance improvements and bring about borough-wide consistency, the Council has created a dedicated commercial services team for Housing. It is also using a reserve contractor to support where necessary, undertaking weekly operational meetings, holding monthly contract meetings, exercising the contract's default procedure, closely monitoring an improvement plan and establishing good practice workshops with the north-area contractor. The Council has also appointed a change management consultant that we closely monitor to work with the contractor (at the contractor's expense) to support its internal operational changes. The contractor has also committed to an additional 25% operative resource (also at its own expense) and weekly meetings are being held with its Chief Executive to monitor its progress.

It is really disappointing that this contract didn't settle in as quickly as all the other contracts. But our strong contract management working and is effectively holding contractors to account to ensure better service delivery. Performance is now a lot better and moving in the right direction. This has results in 83% of surveyed residents are now reporting satisfaction with the quality of their repair, with 93% reporting that the tradesperson was polite and helpful, and 95% reporting that their home was left clean and tidy upon completion of the

work. Also, 65% of the new operatives undertaking the work live in Lambeth and the contractor is actively undertaking lots of local social value initiatives.

The Council will continue its close scrutiny, robust contract management and support to bring about a consistently good borough-wide repairs service that is good value for money and works for our residents.

17. Councillor Paul Gadsby

To: Councillor Claire Holland, Leader of the Council

Knatchbull Road roundabout wildlife project

Vassall councillors are very pleased to hear that a wildlife project is now being considered for the Knatchbull Road roundabout, especially as these kinds of projects have been championed by Cllr Gallop over many years.

Could I ask for more details of the project and an overview of similar positive projects across the borough?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The planned changes to the Knatchbull Road roundabout are part of the overall Lambeth Bee Roads project. The grass on the roundabout will be left uncut throughout the year and a range of native wildflowers will be planted to supplement what is already present. If required for safety reasons a margin will be strimmed around the edge of the roundabout on a regular basis. The meadow will then be cut in early winter, with clippings removed. In addition, subject to funding being identified, the concrete parking bay on the roundabout will be replaced with soft landscaping. Officers are also considering the removal of some of the plethora of railings surrounding the area, for replacement with more visually appealing planters.

Lambeth Bee Roads, of which the Knatchbull Road project is one part, is an ambitious project responding to Lambeth's declared ecological crisis. We aim to convert 10 miles of roadside land into linear wildlife corridors for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. This will provide a connecting web of wildflower meadows across the borough as part of London's Nature Recovery Strategy, joining up existing wildlife sites and increasing access to nature for residents, as well as making walking, wheeling and cycling around the borough a more pleasant experience; with some schemes also designed to reduce surface water flooding. In practice, species-poor turf on Highways and Housing land will be stripped and replaced with a special low fertility growing media and wildflower seed mixes we have specifically developed for Lambeth. As well as setting aside initial funding from the Parks capital programme to get this off the ground, we have submitted a £500,000 grant application to the GLAs Green and Resilient Spaces fund to greatly accelerate the project and fund dedicated staff to develop the project. Our application was shortlisted at Round 1 and the Round 2 application is being submitted shortly.

18. Councillor Fred Cowell

To: Councillor Danny Adilypour and Councillor Mahamed Hashi (job-share), Cabinet Members for Sustainable Transport, Environment and Clean Air

Traffic data collected by Council

Where traffic counters are installed on a road to count the number and type of vehicles on the road, on a quarterly or other periodic basis, can the full data set be made available for the residents on the road to see how many vehicles use their road at a given time of day?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The council carries out traffic surveys regularly at a wide range of locations across the borough in order to better understand traffic patterns and monitor trends and the impact of changes resulting from transport schemes and initiatives. We are committed to sharing this data and currently do so in response to requests from individuals and groups. In order to make this process easier and more accessible we are aiming to provide access to all data in a downloadable format via our website. Further work is required to achieve this however and the timescales will depend on other work priorities. In the meantime, Councillors are welcome to continue to request that the data is shared by email and officers will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible.

19. Councillor Ben Kind

To: Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Deputy Leader (Jobs, Skills and Community Safety)

Safety on Brixton Hill and Rush Common

To ask the Cabinet Member what measures are being put in place to improve public safety along Brixton Hill and Rush Common - particularly those to make the environment safer for women and address antisocial behaviour, drug dealing and sex work?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The Council has been working with partners to address these issues including violence against women and girls, drugs misuse and antisocial behaviour. We have been directly engaging with the community through the Tulse Hill Lambeth Made Communities Forum to identify and tackle key issues via the ward action plan.

Public Protection, the council's Partnership Plus Proactive Police Team, Tulse Hill and Brixton Hill SNTs and the Brixton Town Centre Team having been working closely around Brixton Hill and Rush Common. Activity has included employing a range of enforcement tools including Community Protection Notice Warnings for individuals causing anti-social behaviour in the area, and closure orders for properties linked to Drug dealing. The Police

are also gathering evidence to obtain Community Behaviour Order's for those drugs dealing and committing ASB in the Rush Common and Brixton Hill area.

Improving the safety of women and girls in both private and public spaces is a key priority for Lambeth Council and we have recently launched our new [Lambeth Made Safer Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021-27](#). The delivery of this work will be overseen and monitored by a new VAWG Strategic Partnership Board. The murder of Sarah Everard in March last year after she was making her way home to Brixton from Clapham has worsened feelings of safety for women and girls, with resident feedback showing only half of women in Brixton Hill said they are safe from crime when walking in their local area at night.

We were recently awarded Home Office funding of £544k as part of their [Safer Streets 3 Fund](#) and were one of only three lots of funding agreed for London with feedback on the strength of our bid. The aim of this Fund is to improve the safety of public places for all, with a particular focus on reducing VAWG crimes and improving women and girls' feelings of safety in public places. This work will include a focus on Brixton Hill and Rush common as hotspot areas for anti-social behaviour, violence (including against those involved in street-based sex-work/prostitution), robbery and drug offences, which should also be impacted on by the new measures. The project will focus on increasing visibility using lighting, CCTV and environmental management, resulting in reduced ability for perpetrators to 'hide' and increased safety and feelings of safety for women and girls using these public spaces. By communicating these practical activities to residents, we aim to improve intelligence, monitor impact of these works, increase reporting, deter perpetrators, and develop the opportunity for future environmental improvements.

We are committed to making Lambeth a borough where everyone is safe in both private and public spaces.

20. Councillor Jackie Meldrum

To: Councillor Matthew Bennett, Deputy Leader Planning, Investment and New Homes

Recycling centre in West Norwood

In July 2021 the council turned down the planning application from Southwark Metals to build a mega-metal recycling centre in West Norwood to collect & sort over 10% of London's metal waste. Assuming the applicant's appeal to the Independent Planning Inspector in March 2022 is unsuccessful what activities will the applicant entitled to carry out on the site in accordance with Lambeth's policies without a further planning application?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The site on Windsor Grove was last in use as a car breakers business. It is a Safeguarded Waste Site as designated under the Lambeth Local Plan (2021) and London Plan, and falls within the West Norwood Commercial Area Key Industrial Business Area (KIBA).

A Certificate of Lawful Use granted on 27/09/1994 confirmed that the site had a lawful land use as a car dismantling and disposal depot. There is no evidence to suggest that this use has changed, and it is understood that the previous operation only ceased prior to the submission of the planning application in March 2020. As such the lawful use of the site is

for a car dismantling and disposal depot, which is a form of metal waste recycling. The certificate does not specify a capacity limit or use class and it is likely to have been a Sui Generis use (a combination of Class B2 car breaking and Class A1 sales of car parts).

In land use planning terms the site could be put back into a use in line with the existing lawful use (i.e. car dismantling and disposal depot) without the need to seek planning consent. A potential future use that is not for car dismantling and disposal purposes would constitute a material change of use, and thereby require planning permission through the submission of a planning application for consideration by the local planning authority.

It should be noted that operational development works to enable the reuse of the site, such as new buildings, are likely to require planning permission. The applicant has been made aware of this and has been encouraged to contact the council's planning department should any operational development works be planned for the site to bring it back into use.